

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>St George's Church of England Academy, Newtown</b>	
Address	St George's Street, Newtown, Birmingham, B19 3QY
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Good

School's vision
<p>"For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord. "Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11</p> <p>'Growing together in Newtown'</p> <p>Our children are the tree and the leaves and Birmingham is their city. Our children will be the ones to bring about healing and restoration within families, schools and communities.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The deeply embedded Christian vision and values are lived out lovingly by staff and pupils daily. This ensures that they have a significant and sustained impact on the local community 'growing together in Newtown'.</li> <li>• School leaders make wise, vision-driven decisions to enable pupils, staff, and families to flourish. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the academy's Church school effectiveness is not fully embedded.</li> <li>• Collective worship has a positive impact on everyone in the school. It is invitational and inclusive. Pupils take part in the evaluation of worship, although there are limited opportunities for them to plan and lead.</li> <li>• Opportunities for personal prayer and spiritual reflection are evident. However, the school does not have a shared approach to the development of spiritual growth.</li> <li>• Religious education (RE) is engaging and accessible for all. Pupils take pride in their work and understand the importance of learning about Christianity and a range of faiths.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop the monitoring and evaluation of the Christian ethos and character of the school so that leaders and governors know how well the vision is driving Christian distinctiveness.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for pupils to lead and plan their worship in order to increase the sense of ownership and creativity.</li> <li>• Strengthen the influence of spirituality within the school community so that there is a shared understanding of its value in the life of this school.</li> </ul>



## Inspection findings

St George's is a loving, respectful, and caring school in the heart of its inner-city community. The deeply embedded Christian vision affirms the belief that God has a plan for everyone. The school serves a culturally diverse community with many families seeking refugee status. Leaders recognise the challenging journey that many families have taken to reach the area. They go out of their way to ensure that the school is a place of safety and belonging, where all can flourish. Pupils and families are greeted each morning by staff with welcoming words and smiles. As a result, the school is a place of kindness and support where everyone is known and cared for in an atmosphere of innate Christian love.

Leaders, including governors, have ensured that the school's vision and values are understood and respected by this diverse school community. Those of different faiths, and of no religious faith, have a place here. The most vulnerable are supported through the school's individual and caring approach. There are strong links with the multi-academy trust (MAT) vision, to 'live life in all its fullness', and leaders are aspirational for pupils' futures. The school is supported well by governors. However, monitoring and evaluation of its effectiveness as a Church school, by leaders, including governors, is not consistently rigorous. This means that continuous evaluations of some aspects of Christian distinctiveness are not evident and therefore they do not contribute to improvement planning.

Leaders have made bold decisions to ensure that pupils and staff succeed and flourish. They regularly outline the school's vision and the desire for this to reach out into the community. The family support worker has a positive and significant impact. The school goes out of its way to help families with their personal circumstances. For example, the office team ensure communication from school is translated for families when needed. Parents are highly appreciative of this approach and some link it to the principles of Christian faith, with all being welcome. They state 'you'll never find another school like St George's'.

The school's curriculum allows opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and apply it to themselves, their community, and the wider world. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are encouraged to flourish and succeed. Teachers, new to the profession, are well supported. They are enthusiastic about the professional and personal support they receive from the school and the MAT. Staff are encouraged to flourish in their roles, often taking on new learning and opportunities. They rightly comment on how the senior leadership team live out the vision daily through the love and support shown to all staff. The school does not have a shared language concerning spirituality. Therefore opportunities for spiritual moments to be seamlessly woven through the curriculum are limited.

Pupils are encouraged to love others through the strong emphasis that is placed on healing and restoration within the Christian vision. Pupils here are confident and caring. They are rightly proud of their school and its inclusive approach. They enthusiastically celebrate diversity and difference. They comment that 'everyone is welcome here' and report that bullying does not happen at their school. This matches the findings of the inspection. Pupils apply the school's vision and values to everyday situations giving examples of acts of service that take place. Personal development opportunities are a key part of the school curriculum offer. For example, children learn to play instruments, have access to a wide range of diverse literature and take part in sporting events during their time at the school. Staff are committed to ensuring pupils have interesting and relevant experiences to support and enhance their learning. This focus links directly to the school's vision of a hope and a future for all.

The school's vision about growing together is lived out in classrooms. Pupils are polite and respectful to others, and because of this behaviour around school is of a high standard. Staff

care about pupils' wellbeing. An example of this is that each class has a worry jar where pupils can share concerns and anxieties. Leaders and staff understand and prioritise strategies that promote positive mental health. The school raises money both for local and international charities. Pupils have a clear understanding of the need for social justice and actively engage in change. For example, they hold non uniform days to raise money to support families in Sudan, a country with whom many pupils have links.

Collective worship forms a key part of the school day. It is invitational throughout. Pupils and staff are asked to pray in the way they wish or to use the time to sit quietly and be respectful. Pupils lead opening and closing prayers and sing their school song joyfully. They are encouraged to reflect on Christian stories, consider their thoughts and share insightful answers to questions. There are varied opportunities to reflect on worship, through pupil reflection sheets and large class collective worship books. These reflections lead to acts of service such as organising a food bank for local families, following worship at Harvest time. They are also used by the collective worship team to plan future worship themes. The learning from worship is extended into classrooms using reflective spaces. Pupils and staff articulate how worship helps 'grow their minds together'. The use of school values for half termly themes allow the school community to ensure these remain pivotal to all that they do. The school has reliable plans to make more effective use of its outdoor spaces and in order to enhance creativity within their worship.

Leaders regard RE as an academic subject. Pupils understand the relevance of it to their lives. They speak confidently about the need to know and understand more so that they can make sure they are respectful. They can recall information they have previously learnt and take real pride in their work. The curriculum is well-sequenced and meets the context of this school. It ensures that pupils learn about Christianity as a global world religion alongside other world faiths. Pupils learn about similarities and differences across religions, for example, comparing a Sikh Langar meal with a Lord Mayors Banquet. Regular monitoring of learning in RE is used to give feedback to staff and improve teaching. Pupils speak passionately about their visits to places of worship, in each year group, and how this makes their learning come to life.

Information			
School	St George's Church of England Academy, Newtown	Inspection date	23 June 2023
URN	139126	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Birmingham	Pupils on roll	340
MAT/Federation	Birmingham Diocesan MAT		
Headteacher	Linda Francis		
Chair of Governors	Matt Thompson		
Inspector	Jo Westaby	No.	2128